

Application Serial No. 10/748,837
Amendment Dated November 5, 2009
Reply to Office Action Dated May 13, 2009

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 4-16, 18-25, 27-34 and 36-38 are pending.

Claims 1-2, 4-16, 18-25, 27-34 and 36-38 stand rejected.

Claims 1-2, 4-16, 18-25, 27-34 and 36-38 are hereby presented for reconsideration.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 9, 23, 24 and 31 are independent. The Examiner has removed the prior rejection, but now rejects these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the newly cited Ryan (U.S. Patent No. 6,744,858) in view of the previously cited Shtrivelman (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0054670) and Foldare (U.S. Patent No. 5,978,671). Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's contentions and submit the following remarks in response.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a call routing system for use in a directory assistance system having a primary call routing device at a first call center configured to receive directory assistance calls from callers and to determine, for each of the calls, whether the calls will be handled by the first call center or by a second call center in the directory assistance system among a plurality of call centers.

A secondary router at the first call center in the directory assistance system is configured to initially route the calls within the first call center to the primary call routing device, and if the primary call routing device is off-line, the secondary call router employs a default call distribution logic to route the calls among the first call center and the plurality of call centers in the directory assistance systems.

Applicants, in the prior Amendment clarified that the claims relate to a directory assistance system for routing calls between a first call center 2 and any one of a plurality of second call centers 2'. See for example, paragraph [0018] of the present application to support this clarification.

This arrangement provides an advantage over prior art call routing arrangements within a directory assistance system by employing redundant call distribution. Here, the primary call routing device 34 is used to distribute calls between the initially receiving first call center 2 and a second remotely located call center 2'. See paragraph [0027] and Figure 2. In the event that the primary call routers 34 are offline, the secondary call router 30, located at the same first call center 2 employs a default call distribution logic to ensure continued load balancing call routing between the plurality of second call centers 2'. See paragraph [0073] and Figure 4.

To form the rejection, the Examiner relies on the newly cited Ryan reference and suggests that Ryan teaches

“... a primary call routing device (Fig. [3] 2(sic), 60 Primary) at a first call

center (Figs. 2-3, 30, 32) in the directory assistance system configured to receive directory assistance calls from the callers among a plurality of call centers (Figs. 1-3, 30s) (Figs. 1-4, column 4, lines 59-60, ie., received a call through a router at the call center);

a secondary router (Fig. 2, 65 Backup) at said first call center (Figs. 2-3, 30, 32) in said directory assistance system, said secondary router configured to initially route said calls within said first call center to said primary call routing device, and wherein if said primary call routing device is off-line, said secondary call router employs a default call distribution logic to route said calls among said first call center and said plurality of call centers (Fig. 1-3, 30s)”

According to this explanation, the Examiner appears to mis-identify the elements of the cited reference by comparing a server of Ryan with the router of the present claims, rather than citing to the *router* from the prior art reference, which does not function the same as the claimed router arrangement.

The Ryan reference teaches a system for providing improved transfer of ALI and ANI information for certain services, such as emergency 9-1-1 services. The various call centers (30) are shown in Figures 1-3. As noted in column 2, lines 37-40, these centers are each for specific geographic areas. As noted in column 3, lines 50-54, element 60 is primary server and element 65 is a backup server. However, these items, as shown in Figure 2, do not have routing functions for routing calls between call centers. Instead, as noted in column 5, lines 15-25, these elements are used within the central data manager to deliver the call screen, which includes the ALI (automatic location information) including the name and the address and other pertinent information about that calling party to the call taker at the call center 30.

In Ryan, the router that routes calls between one call center 30 and another call center 30 is done by *the call manager 55*, also located in central data manager 32, as detailed in column 4, lines 50-54. This functionality is further supported by a router 98.

Firstly, there are no back-up routers. Secondly, the “routing” performed at all is to specific one call center among many call centers, but it is not distributive routing system. The routing is to one specific call center, such as the local call center relative to the caller as in the examples.

As such, the cited Ryan reference, either taken alone or in combination with the previously cited Shtrivelman and Foldare, does not teach or suggest the elements of the present independent claims. For example, even if the references were combined, the resulting system would still not teach or suggest, a secondary router at the first call center for initially routing calls within the first call center to the primary call routing device, and where if the primary call routing device is off-line, the secondary call router employs a default call distribution logic to route the calls among the first call center and the plurality of call centers in the directory assistance systems.

For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent claims 1 and 24 be withdrawn. Also, as claims 2, 3-8, 25 and 17-30 depend therefrom respectively, these claims should be allowed for at least the same reasons.

Separately, the Examiner has rejected independent claims 9 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §

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103(a) as being unpatentable over Ryan, Shivelman in view of Foldare et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,978,671). Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's contentions and submit the following remarks in response.

Independent claim 9 is directed to a call routing system for use in a directory assistance system having a primary call routing device configured to receive directory assistance calls from callers and a frequent caller database, configured to store information corresponding to frequent callers.

A frequent caller routing module is coupled to the primary call routing device and is configured to determine if a particular caller's information is stored in the frequent caller database where if the caller's information is stored in the frequent caller database, the primary call routing device utilizes the information and determines if the caller is to receive priority call routing where the frequent caller routing module attempts to designate a desired predefined percentage of calls of the total numbers of calls to the directory assistance system as priority calls.

Such an arrangement provides for priority routing of calls, such as routing to more experienced call handling agents and shorter wait times for customers intended to be served with priority. For example, as noted in paragraph [0035] of the present application, this allows the system to set a percentage of calls out of the total calls received that are treated in a priority manner in order to improve service to those customers.

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To form the rejection, particularly, of the element that “the frequent caller routing module attempts to designate a desired predefined percentage of calls of the total numbers of calls to the directory assistance system as priority calls,” the Examiner cites to Shtivelman Figs. 1-3, step 87 (Fig 3) and paragraphs [0046] and [0053].

As noted in prior Amendments, Shtivelman is directed to an emergency call distribution system that queues overflow calls at a call center. However, when emergency personal are trying to call with vital information they may be looped into the queue. Shtivelman offers a form of coding to determine if the caller is important (emergency services) and then if they are, the call is pushed through out of the queue to the original destination (the emergency operator). Step 87 in Figure 3 (paragraph [0053]) of Shtivelman describes this process.

Contrary to the Examiner’s assertion, there is no designated desired predefined percentage of calls of the total numbers of calls to the directory assistance system as priority calls. The only designated as priority calls in Shtivelman are those from authorized emergency personal (or others with such codes). These calls can not be a predetermined percentage as their quantity can not be known in advance.

As such, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art, either alone or in combination with one another, does not teach or suggest all of the elements of independent claims 9 and 31. For example, there is no teaching or suggestion in any one of Shtivelman Ryan or Foldare that discloses a *frequent caller routing module that attempts to designate a desired*

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predefined percentage of calls of the total numbers of calls to the directory assistance system as priority calls.

For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent claims 9 and 31 be withdrawn. Also, as claims 10-16, 18-22, 32-34 and 36-38 depend therefrom respectively, these claims should be allowed for at least the same reasons.

Applicants note that independent claim 23 includes at least the above described features of claims 1 and 9 and should be deemed allowable for at least the same reasons set forth above in support of those claims.

In view of the foregoing Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 1-2, 4-16, 18-25, 27-34 and 36-3 are in condition for allowance, the earliest possible notice of which is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner feels that an interview would facilitate the prosecution of this Application, they are invited to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: November 5, 2009